



City of Corpus Christi

1201 Leopard Street
Corpus Christi, TX 78401
cctexas.com

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Municipal Court Committee

Thursday, July 9, 2020

2:00 PM

Council Chambers

PUBLIC NOTICE

A. Call meeting to order

Chairman Rudy Garza called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

B. Roll Call:

Rudy Garza, Chair
Paulette Guajardo
Gil Hernandez
Ben Molina

City Secretary Rebecca Huerta called the roll and verified that a quorum was present to conduct the meeting. (Council Member Guajardo participated by videoconference - joined the meeting at 2:08 p.m.).

Staff members present: Judge Gail Loeb (videoconference); Municipal Court Director Gilbert Hernandez (videoconference); Assistant City Manager Keith Selman (teleconference); Assistant City Attorney Buck Brice.

Present: 4 - Rudy Garza, Paulette Guajardo, Ben Molina and Gil Hernandez

C. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

D. Approval of minutes

1. [20-0780](#) Minutes of the April 11, 2019 and April 25, 2019 meetings

Chairman Garza asked for approval of the minutes. Council Member Molina made a motion to approve the April 11, 2019 and April 25, 2019 minutes as presented, seconded by Council Member Hernandez, and approved unanimously.

E. Briefings:

2. [20-0782](#) Update on Municipal Court Collection and Placement Services by Linebarger, Goggan, Blair & Sampson

Linebarger Managing Partner Paul Chapa provided an update on delinquent court fees and fines collections. Mr. Chapa covered the following topics: collection program overview; value-added services; advanced scofflaw program; aged accounts; annual court fees and fines collections over the last six years; monthly collection activity over the last 24 months; collection activities; performance results; at the City's request due to COVID-19, Linebarger stopped all mailing and collection calls in March.

Council members, Judge Loeb, Municipal Court Director Hernandez, and Mr. Chapa discussed the following topics: develop a policy on how to handle aging accounts (e.g. pursue newer cases more aggressively than older cases; when to purge cases); software issues have been addressed; the older the case, the harder it is to collect due to errors, missing data; council member request for a delinquent/aging account report; Linebarger will research other cities' best practices related to aging accounts and work with staff to make a recommendation; oldest cases date back to 2000; in mid-March, the city asked Linebarger to stop collections due to a COVID-19; the Texas Supreme Court and Office of Court Administration extended all deadlines and stopped all warrants; collections will resume when authorized by Texas Supreme Court; as of June 1, the Municipal Court authorized Linebarger to continue collection efforts on cases filed before mid-March.
3. [20-0783](#) Update on Municipal Court Judicial Division by Presiding Judge Gail Loeb

Presiding Judge Gail Loeb Judge Loeb reported that Judge Patrick O'Hare has submitted written notice of his upcoming retirement. His last day in the office would be July 15; his last day with the City would be Sept. 8, 2020. She discussed options for filling the vacancy. The Council can use a part-timer to fill in the hours, make a part-timer into a full-timer, or begin the hiring process for a new judge. She noted that the hiring process for new judges/reappointing judges begins in January 2021.

Judge Loeb provided a brief update on municipal court operations during COVID-19. She said the court transitioned to conducting hearings and magistrations remotely. Jury trials are prohibited through September 1, and will probably be extended past this date. She described the administrative challenges in making the transition to remote hearings, and said the judges were working mostly from home, and only one judge was physically at the office.

Council members, Judge Loeb and Municipal Court Director Gilbert Hernandez discussed the following topics: the court has continued accepting payments online and processing citations; doors were closed to the public until June 1; revenues are down by 30% to 40% from this time last year; community is experiencing unemployment and driving less, leading to fewer citations, which affects revenues; fewer personnel available for processing; under current conditions, the court is functioning as best it can.

F. Executive Session:

The Committee went into executive session at 2:56 p.m. The Committee returned at 3:36 p.m.

4. [20-0781](#) **Executive Session pursuant to Texas Government Code § 551.071 and Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.05 to consult with attorneys concerning legal issues related to appointment, reappointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of all Municipal Court Judges and Texas Government Code § 551.074 (Personnel Matters) to deliberate the appointment, reappointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of all Municipal Court Judges with possible discussion and action in open session.**

This E-Session Item was discussed in executive session.

G. Action Items

5. [20-0785](#) Discussion with possible action regarding replacement of retiring Municipal Court Judge.

No action was taken regarding this item (see Item 3 for discussion).

H. Future Agenda Items

Chairman Garza asked if there were any requests for future agenda items. Council Member Hernandez asked for an agenda item to discuss improvements to the judicial performance evaluation form.

I. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Garza adjourned the meeting at 3:37 p.m.